

# Growing Green



April 2014

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## Mission Statement

*The mission of the Leon County Office of Sustainability is to promote adoption of practices that improve our quality of life, protect our natural environment, and strengthen our economy, both within County government and within the community at large.*

## Message from the County Administrator

This issue of the *Growing Green* newsletter brings you news of Leon County's 2014 sustainability highlights to date. Both County and community features exemplify collaborative efforts between Leon County government and the local community that have resulted in a stronger and greener place. Whether it's creating a new community garden or opening a new public park, Leon County is proud to be part of it all. Read on to find out how you can get involved too. Best wishes for the spring season and upcoming Earth Day on April 22.

Sincerely,

Vincent S. Long

Leon County Administrator



## County Highlight: Pumpkin Place Community Garden

It seems like Leon County residents can't get enough gardening! Leon County recently dedicated another community garden site on County-owned property, the Pumpkin Place Community Garden.

For those of you who don't know, Leon County administers a popular Community Garden Program. The program supports two types of gardens: community gardens that are created on County property to grow food for use by the gardeners who maintain the site, and stakeholder gardens for which Leon County provides ancillary support. (Continued on page 2).



**Pumpkin Place Garden Organizer Frank Voran (right) gets some assistance tending the garden from Leon County Commissioners John Dailey and Mary Ann Lindley**



The Pumpkin Place Community Garden began as a resident-led initiative in the Lake Jackson Heights neighborhood. Garden organizer Frank Voran, retired principal of Woodville Elementary School, worked closely with the County to develop the garden on a County property that had been acquired to address flooding problems. The garden has added new social and environmental benefits to this previously vacant site. The founding gardeners are using Native American planting strategies and crops at the site, and the garden is named for Seminole squash (very similar to a pumpkin). Other garden crops special to Leon County's agricultural heritage include Indian corn and velvet beans. The garden has its own compost area, and it is planned to evolve into a 100-percent organic garden. But corn and beans are not the only things on the gardeners' plates – the Pumpkin Place Garden also has a beekeeping operation and fruit and nut trees.

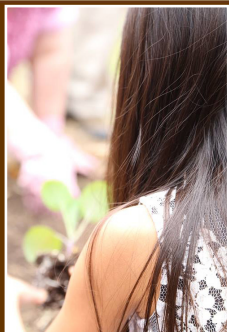


*Community gardeners work together to ensure the success of the garden.*

Along with the fresh veggies the garden provides, the garden is bringing together neighbors, some of whom have met for the first time because of the garden. Leon County is pleased to support community gardens because of the combined social and environmental benefits they contribute to neighborhoods. A local garden allows neighbors to come together to share knowledge, tell stories, and even meet new people, creating a close-knit and safer community. Leon County is honored to support a new community garden, and as always, encourages its residents to "Go Green!" If you have questions about the Community Garden Program, please contact Sustainability Coordinator Kathryn Ziewitz at **(850) 606-5383** or email [Sustainability@LeonCountyFl.gov](mailto:Sustainability@LeonCountyFl.gov).

*Interested in applying for a  
Leon County Community Garden mini-grant?*

Visit our website at  
[www.GrowingGreen.org/food.asp](http://www.GrowingGreen.org/food.asp)



## Community Highlight: Discovery at Cascades Park

Imagine a playground that does not consist mostly of metal and plastic, but instead is designed to mimic a Florida landscape. You will find such a place at the Discovery Park playground located in our downtown area's new Cascades Park, a project supported by Leon County. This one-of-a-kind playground features natural surroundings such as a climbing set that was created from a 100-year-old cypress tree excavated from a lake in Wewahitchka. It also has a water pump and sluice that children can operate. Discovery Park, presented by First Commerce Credit Union, was the brainchild of the Knight Creative Communities Institute's (KCCI) Cultivate Cascades team. Discovery Park was designed by Meghan Mick, the founder of *From the Ground Up*, a design and consulting firm that specializes in playscapes and healing and therapeutic gardens. Mick donated her services for design and construction coordination. She wanted the park to have greater purposes than play – it is designed to help kids notice and appreciate the natural landscape around them and develop a stronger sense of place, which benefits a child's social, academic, and physical development.



*Young ones demonstrate that the "Cypress Climb" is aptly named.*

Along with introducing kids to a natural Florida landscape, the play area spurs creativity because, as Mick states, how to use the equipment is "not so blatantly obvious." Children have to figure out how to play in the park. Not only does this enhance creativity, but it also helps children build necessary social and learning skills.

For more information on how to enhance your child's and your own outdoor experiences, here are a few resources to check out:

- ▶ Get Outdoors Florida [www.GetOutdoorsFlorida.com](http://www.GetOutdoorsFlorida.com)
- ▶ Natural Learning Initiative [www.NaturalLearning.org](http://www.NaturalLearning.org)
- ▶ Children and Nature Network [www.ChildrenAndNature.org](http://www.ChildrenAndNature.org)
- ▶ *Last Child in the Woods*, by Richard Louv. Copies are available at your local Leon County library.



## EVENTS AND PROGRAMS

**April 26**

### **Good Plant, Bad Plant**

*Leon County Office of Sustainability*

Your landscape could be harboring plants that harm our local environment. Sometimes, it is hard to distinguish a “good” plant from a “bad” one. Join us to learn about harmful exotic and invasive plants that damage the environment, methods to eradicate them, and the best plant alternatives for your landscape. The program features local specialists Michael Jenkins, a plant conservation biologist with the Florida Forest Service, and Taylor Vandiver, Leon County’s horticulture Extension agent.

Bring plant samples for identification if you wish. There will be plenty of time for questions and answers in this program, which is part of the quarterly Sustainable Community Matters Program Series offered by Leon County. Light refreshments are provided, and advance registration is not required.



*Inkberry holly is a good native plant for our area.*

The program will be **Saturday, April 26**, from 11 a.m. – 1 p.m. at the Northside Branch Library, 5513 Thomasville Road.

**April 22**

### **Earth Day**

This is a day to honor and protect our planet, and a chance to adopt sustainable practices in your life. Tune in at [www.SustainableTallahassee.org/Calendar](http://www.SustainableTallahassee.org/Calendar) to see local events for the day!



**April 26**

### **Green Arts Fest**

*The Sharing Tree at Railroad Square*

The Sharing Tree presents the 2nd annual Green Arts Fest, **Saturday April 26th** from noon – 5 p.m. at the Railroad Square Art Park, 617 Industrial Drive. This is a free event focused on recycled arts and sustainable living. Activities provided by partners and sponsors include:

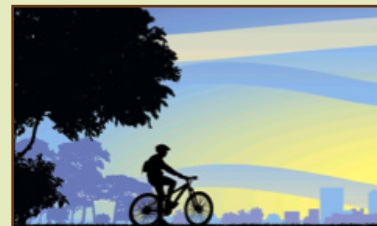
- ▶ A gardening activity presented by iGrow
- ▶ Several free art activities & demos
- ▶ Live music and mural creation
- ▶ Art & food vendors
- ▶ Aluminum can collection drive

In addition, you can bring donation items for both Goodwill and the Sharing Tree. For further details please contact The Sharing Tree Director, Carly Sinnadurai at [Recycle4Art@yahoo.com](mailto:Recycle4Art@yahoo.com).

**May 1**

### **National Bike Month**

May is National Bike Month, and there are a multitude of events being planned in the Leon County area to celebrate the bicycle and the many reasons we ride. These include a Helmet Safety Event on **April 27** at Tom Brown Park, a free Cycling Savvy Course on **May 2 and 3**, and Bike to School and Work Days on **May 7 and 9**. The list of events is growing every day as organizations call in and report them, so please visit the Commuter Services of North Florida website frequently to stay up to date. The link to the website is [www.CommuterServices.org](http://www.CommuterServices.org).



**May 3**

### **Household Hazardous Waste and Electronics Collection Event**

*Leon County Hazardous Waste Center*

Hazardous Waste and Electronics Collection Events are held on the first Saturday of the month during the school year at the Public Works Operations Center, 2280 Miccosukee Road. The events are held from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Here are a few examples of what to bring: aerosol cans, bleach, old TVs and computers, household cleaners, motor oil, and paints and thinners. Visit [LeonCountyFL.gov/HHW](http://LeonCountyFL.gov/HHW) for more examples of what you can and cannot bring to a Collection Event. For more information about these events, call **850-606-1803**.

## Local Summer Camps

**June 16 - 20**

### **Wildlife and Outdoor Recreation Day Camp**

*Leon County Cooperative Extension Office*

This outdoor nature camp held by the Leon County 4-H program will provide participating youth with a basic understanding of environmental stewardship, wildlife, safety, and fun in an outdoor setting. Sessions will be taught by qualified instructors in aquatics,



forestry, conservation, shooting sports, and orienteering, also incorporating National STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) skills. The camp will be held at the new Jefferson County Extension Office site, approximately 30 minutes east of Tallahassee off of Highway 90. The camp is for ages 10-18, and will run from 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. The registration deadline is **May 30**. Click [here](http://leon.ifas.ufl.edu/4h/summer-day-camps/) for more information. To register, visit this website: <http://leon.ifas.ufl.edu/4h/summer-day-camps/>.

## July 15-17

### Talking Trash Recycling Day Camp

*Leon County Cooperative Extension and  
Leon County Recycling Program*

At the “Talking Trash” camp co-hosted by Leon County 4-H and Leon County’s Recycling Program, youth participants will learn how they can help create a more sustainable community by reducing, reusing, and recycling. Campers get an inside look at how solid waste is managed, participate in outdoor activities, and make creative crafts from everyday items. The camp will be held at the Leon County Solid Waste Facility at 7550 Apalachee Parkway. The camp is for youth ages 10-15, and will run from 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. The registration deadline is **May 16**. Please visit this website for more information on how to register: <http://leon.ifas.ufl.edu/4H/Summer-Day-Camps/>.

## Did You Know?

Leon County’s Cooperative Extension building is one of only **seven** net-zero retrofitted buildings in the nation. Also known as the Sustainable Demonstration Center, the 50-year old building was retrofitted in March 2012 with solar power and an ultra-efficient geothermal heating and air system. One year later, it was certified by the New Building Institute (NBI) that these retrofits have allowed the building to generate as much power as it consumes. In other words, it costs nothing in energy consumption to heat, cool, light, and power the building. Click [here](#) to see the NBI report that featured the Sustainable Demonstration Center.



*The Extension building at 615 Paul Russell Road.*

## Nature’s Calendar

### April - June

- ▶ Plant extra parsley for black swallowtail butterfly larvae to forage.
- ▶ Watch for hummingbirds feeding on blooms of columbine and buckeye.
- ▶ Blooming wildflowers and pitcher plants blanket the wet savannahs of the Panhandle.
- ▶ Bald eagles begin migrating north.
- ▶ Alligators begin moving about, seeking new territories and mates.

- ▶ Bobcat kittens are born in April and May.
- ▶ Loggerhead sea turtles begin to nest on sandy beaches along the the Gulf of Mexico.
- ▶ June is the height of gopher tortoise nesting season.



*A young bobcat enjoys some shade at the Tallahassee Museum of History and Natural Science.*

## A Note from the Leon County Sustainability Team

### The Leon County Sustainability Team Wishes You a Happy Earth Day!

Contact us at [Sustainability@LeonCountyFl.gov](mailto:Sustainability@LeonCountyFl.gov). If you wish to be removed from our list, simply choose the “unsubscribe” tab at the bottom of the newsletter.

Best regards from Leon County’s Sustainability Team,



**Maggie Theriot**



**Kathryn Ziewitz**



**Kelli Thurson**

*You are not Atlas carrying the world on your shoulder. It is good to remember that the planet is carrying you.*

*-Vandana Shiva*